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# PIONEER

The History of Utah's  
Mercantile Business

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# PIONEER

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### MISSION STATEMENT

The National Society of Sons of Utah Pioneers honors early and modern-day pioneers, both young and older, for their faith in God, devotion to family, loyalty to church and country, hard work, service to others, courage in adversity, personal integrity, and unyielding determination. Pioneer Magazine supports the mission of the Society.

### COVER ART

Original 1885 Rockport Co-op Store of Summit County, Utah, on permanent display in Pioneer Village at Lagoon. Photo by Susan Lofgren.

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# President's Message

By J. Todd Olsen

**H**ave you ever wondered what Brigham Young saw as he entered the valley on that first July 24th? I have. As he raised himself up on one elbow in the back of the wagon and looked out over the great expanse of the valley below, did he see homes lining the streets, horse-drawn carriages moving people from place to place, churches dotting the valley, small shops with mostly locally made merchandise, the Temple as it was being constructed? Or was his vision further into the future, where homes filled the valley from the foothills to the Great Salt Lake; Trax, cars, and buses moving people through the hustle and bustle of modern life; businesses providing goods from the four corners of the world; restaurants with fresh foods from distant lands; several temples busy doing the Lord's work. What exactly did he see before he spoke those famous words "This is the place"?

This was a harsh land in pioneer times. Most of their time was spent providing the basics of life. One of my great-grandfathers helped to organize a co-op so his neighbors could prosper as a community by working together. Another great-grandfather learned brickmaking in his youth, provided for his family and provided brick for most of the buildings in town. Some of those buildings still stand a century and a half later, a tribute to the quality of the bricks he made. My great-grandmother helped her family by weaving cloth from wool and sewing clothes for her own family and for people in the neighborhood. These were the start of local businesses.

In my youth, my parents and grandparents spent countless hours

canning the bounty of the harvest to be enjoyed throughout the year. Canning has become a lost art. It's much easier to go to case lot sales and stock up on the things you like, than to sweat over a hot stove all day. Factories now make the clothes we buy instead of sewing them ourselves. What used to take most of our time and effort to provide for the bare essentials, we now do in a matter of hours. The small quaint shops of yesteryear are now replaced with large box stores that offer everything we need under one roof. One of the blessings we enjoy in this day and age is more time on our hands. What do we do with all our free time? Television and computers can be both a blessing and a curse, depending on how we use them. Do we use them to help others or just idle away the hours?

My great-grandfather left a journal entry to his posterity that I think would help us all: "I am now 65 years of age, on the declining side of life. As I approach my goal and crown which is waiting for me, I do it with these words on my lips to all my sons and daughters and their posterity, 'Keep the Faith' for it is worth the fight of life and every sacrifice that can be made for it. It will unite us in eternity and cause a mighty rejoicing at the glad reunion. Let not one of my children be missing from it is my constant prayer." His plea was a call to all of us to use the extra time we have to search out our kindred dead and make them a part of our eternal family. Using the internet, we have access to knowledge that doubles every five to six years. We can access genealogical records that would have taken my dad months or years to research.

Our pioneer ancestors spent their lives improving these valleys and the quality of our lives. Now we must reach back through time to help them. Thanks again for this opportunity to serve.

## **Two chapters have reached their goals for the Pioneer Magazine Endowment Fund.**

The Mills Chapter has raised more than \$21,000, including two cash gifts of more than \$5,000, reported Boyd Christensen and Maurice Pia, immediate past and current chapter presidents. This is over and above a sizable stock donation made previously by a member of the Mills Chapter.

The Brigham Young Chapter set a goal of \$15,000 and reached that amount by the end of 2004, according to Bill Anderson, immediate past chapter president. More than one-half of the 90 chapter members contributed to the endowment fund, and more contributions are expected in 2005.

"We are grateful to the Mills and Brigham Young chapters for their leading example in this vitally important fund-raising effort," said Kent Lott. The goal of the Society is to raise \$150,000 for the endowment fund. The interest from the fund will assist in the increasing costs of publishing *Pioneer Magazine*.

A total of \$66,110 has been raised thus far from 20 chapters with about \$3,000 from "at large" members and \$1,500 from other subscribers who are not members of SUP.

"*Pioneer Magazine* is an integral part of the Society," explains Lott. "It is the only window through which many people view the Sons of Utah Pioneers." ▀





# Joseph Smith

## The Businessman

*“My heart is full of desire today to be blessed  
of the God of Abraham, with prosperity  
until I will be able to pay all my debts;  
for it is the delight of my soul to be honest.  
Oh Lord that thou knowest right well.  
Help me and I will give to the poor.”<sup>1</sup>*

—Joseph Smith

by Kenneth R. Mays

Business has been defined in such simple terms as “activity for private profit” or “operations where pecuniary gain is the principal motive.”<sup>2</sup> With Joseph Smith, the definition of business requires a broader perspective. Five months after he organized the Church, Joseph introduced the doctrine that “all things are spiritual” and that the Lord hasn’t at any time given a law that was temporal (D&C 29:34). This concept was paradigmatic to Joseph’s business dealings—the principle became the practice. In other words, there was a confluence of the spiritual and the temporal in many of the Prophet’s business-type activities. While his methods often came from the business side of things, his motives frequently came from the religious realm. Bishops’ storehouses, city planning, temple building, consecration of the Saints’ assets, the United Firm, missions, the support of Church leaders, and so forth all involved elements of both the temporal and the spiritual. The interface of motive and method must be considered when assessing the Prophet’s business skills. Joseph’s remarkable abilities from the business institution of his life are sometimes ignored or forgotten because the objectives for which those abilities were used were not for private profit or pecuniary gain. This is not to say that some of the Prophet’s dealings were not for his personal interest or well-being, but the majority of his business actions had an underlying rationale rooted in





My Servant Joseph  
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religious objectives. This essay briefly reviews some of the business skills of Joseph Smith and argues that, had they been applied exclusively for pecuniary purposes, he would have likely been more successful in his business ventures.

One of Joseph's first business dealings was the purchase and maintenance of a home and property in Harmony, Pennsylvania.<sup>3</sup> During this time, Joseph and Emma had considerable opposition, even persecution, from some of her own family members. This necessitated a move to Fayette, New York, to finish the translation of the Book of Mormon. Joseph returned to Harmony until the summer of 1830. He subsequently sold the Harmony home and the 13-acre parcel of land to Joseph McKune Jr. on June 8, 1833, after moving to Kirtland, Ohio.<sup>4</sup>

From his days as a young man to the end of his life, Joseph Smith demonstrated exceptional management skills and abilities as a motivator of people. Individuals had to first be assessed as to their trustworthiness. There was a constant need to solicit their time and resources as is seen in the example of Martin Harris, the man who sold his farm to finance the publication of the Book of Mormon. That Joseph had the fortitude to even ask such a thing—much less be successful in it—is nothing short of a marvel. Over the years, Joseph would be successful in getting men and women to leave their homes, moving from state to state. They would give of their time and means to go on missions, give one day in ten to build temples, and even offer to die in his place.<sup>5</sup> What businessman or woman wouldn't want that level of ability to win friends and influence people?

The publishing of the Book of Mormon is an excellent case study in which one must examine both method and motive. The project was not undertaken to begin a publishing empire, but to bring people to Christ. Aside from the unique way the text was produced, young Joseph found himself in circumstances similar to anyone of the day who wanted to publish a large volume. He needed help and he needed money. In this he demonstrated remarkable tenacity in seeking a publisher for the book. He first approached Egbert B. Grandin, who initially declined to do the job. Moving on to Rochester, Joseph worked out an agreement with Elihu Marshall to publish and bind the book, but the logistics of this arrangement proved to be unsatisfactory to the Prophet. There has been only one small window of time when there was a business operation in Palmyra that could handle a printing project of this size and this was the time. Joseph wanted to capitalize on the moment so he went back to Grandin and ultimately persuaded him to take on the job. It wasn't long after this project that Grandin left the printing business.<sup>6</sup> The timing was perfect and Joseph came through. He secured the

copyright, raised the necessary capital, had a second copy of the manuscript made, and dealt with Abner Cole's copyright infringements.<sup>7</sup> Such success belies the Prophet's lack of formal education and business experience. Richard Bushman goes so far as to say that the publication of the book made Joseph Smith a minor national figure.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the miracle of producing the text in so short of a time has overshadowed the miracle of getting the book published.

It should be noted that in this instance Joseph's success was limited to the spiritual side of things—there were now five thousand copies of the Book of Mormon to take to the world. But the plan to recover Martin's investment was not successful. It was conceived employing sound financial principles. With a cost of .675 cents per book, the initial retail price of \$1.75 would generate a gross profit margin of 61% ( $\text{gpm} = \text{retail} - \text{cost} \div \text{retail}$ ).

However, a community boycott stifled sales from the beginning. Martin responded by lowering retail to \$1.25 (still a margin of 46%), but even so he could not overcome that community covenant to never purchase a copy of the book.<sup>9</sup> This ultimately necessitated that Martin sell his farm in order to satisfy Grandin.

**T**hroughout his life,  
**Joseph Smith**  
**demonstrated**

**exceptional management**

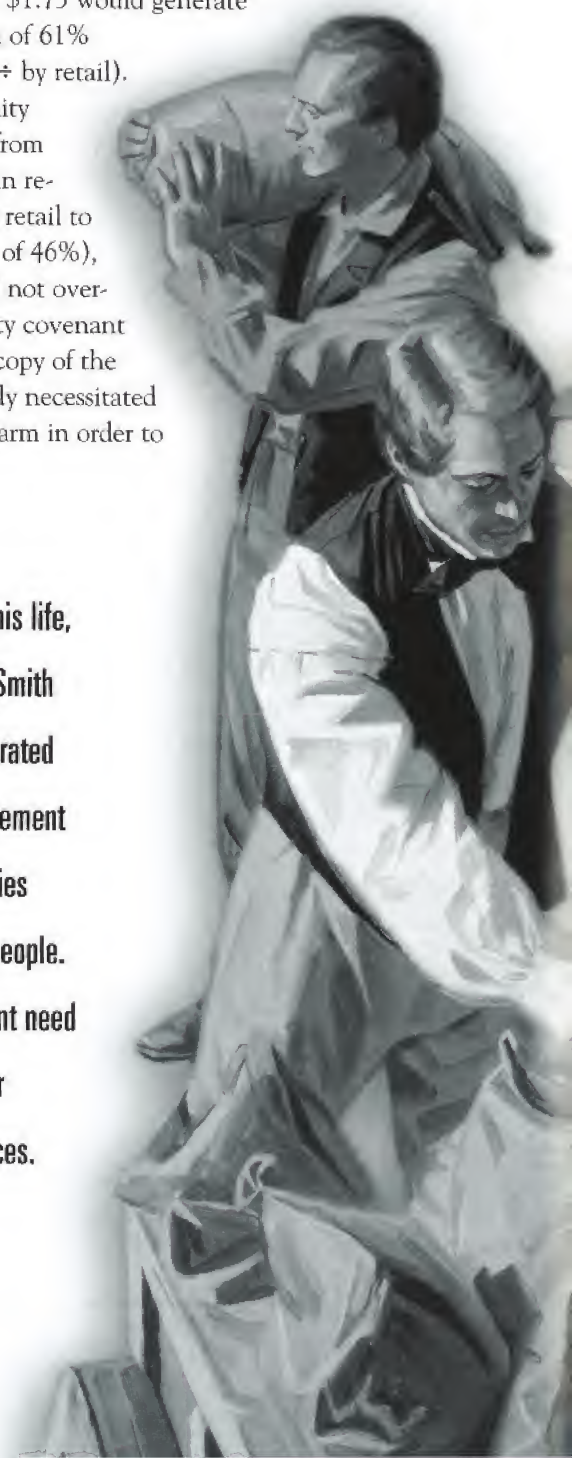
**skills and abilities**

**as a motivator of people.**

**There was a constant need**

**to solicit their**

**time and resources.**





Beyond the production of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith was a master at utilizing the talents of others: the oratory skills of Sidney Rigdon, the organizational skills and loyalty of Brigham Young, or even John C. Bennett, who successfully negotiated the Nauvoo Charter with the Illinois State Legislature. Joseph used other people's money to build the kingdom. He called some to Zion's camp and some to missionary service, sometimes with little more than a week to prepare before departing. Even in recording his own history, Joseph utilized the help of others. LDS historian Dean Jessee has noted that more than two dozen men are known to have assisted the Prophet in some type of clerical or secretarial capacity during his tenure as Church president.<sup>10</sup> The ways in which Joseph Smith utilized the services of others are virtually without number.

Joseph was an organizer. Most businesses beyond the sidewalk lemonade stand function in some sort of organizational paradigm, usually hierarchical in nature. From the beginning, Joseph Smith organized the Church in such a manner. Even with only six members, he and Oliver Cowdery were sustained on April 6, 1830 as the First and Second Elders of the Church.<sup>11</sup> From then on, the Prophet guided an organizational

development that kept pace with the rapid growth of the Church. By June 1830, the Articles and Covenants (now section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants) had been presented to the Church and formally canonized. This document delineated a number of priesthood offices and responsibilities. As the Church grew, new revelations added additional offices and concomitant scripture explaining those offices. Section 41, for example, calls Edward Partridge as the first bishop. In 1835 the Twelve and the Seventy were called and their quorums organized. Even though subsequent Church leaders have made organizational changes as Church membership has grown to 12 million, the basic organizational structure of the Church clearly bears Joseph's signature with the offices and quorums he set in place during his administration over a century and a half ago.

The Prophet was a planner. In 1833 he sent a plat or master plan for the City of Zion to Jackson County, Missouri. This plat provided specific details pertaining to a generic ideal community that could be implemented not only in Missouri but in cities to be established at a future time. Each such community was to become a stake in Isaiah's tent metaphor (see Isaiah 54:2). No city established by the Latter-day Saints optimally utilized the master plan, but evidences of it can be seen in such places as Kirtland, Far West, and early Salt Lake City. Joseph's efforts as a city planner again illustrate his insight and organizational skills even though his motives were not pecuniary. They were based on a dream from the spiritual realm—the creation of a Zion society whose inhabitants would be of one heart and one mind, live in righteousness and have no poor among them (see Moses 7:18).

There was a politico-economic dimension to the Prophet's skills as a businessman. In Nauvoo, with only the high council to act as a quasi-law enforcement agency, Joseph oversaw the production of what emerged as the Nauvoo Charter. This package gave political legitimacy to Joseph's civic vision. It was loaded with governmental and business-type minutia and detail, but his reasons for seeking passage of the charter extended way beyond business or financial interests. The Nauvoo Charter was not the only such charter in the state,<sup>12</sup> but its passage at that time and under those circumstances was a striking success for Joseph and the Church.

Joseph was a leader. From the earliest moments of Church history, the Prophet demonstrated an ability to lead in a manner that is almost without parallel. He enrolled others to follow his lead to the waters of baptism, to Harmony, and to Fayette. Shortly after the Church was organized came one of the first great tests in Mormonism: the move to Ohio. The sacrifice of the Saints who







Third floor of the Grandin printing complex where the Book of Mormon was printed.

followed him to Kirtland was monumental and is largely forgotten.<sup>13</sup> It was then on to Missouri, Nauvoo, the temple quarries, or the mission field. Joseph led as the only president of the Church to simultaneously serve a full-time mission.<sup>14</sup> He led on a much smaller scale as well. On one occasion, “while Joseph was conversing with some of the brethren near his home in Nauvoo, a man came up who said that his home had just been burned down by a mob. Joseph took out five dollars, looked at the other men, and said, ‘I feel sorry for this brother to the amount of five dollars; how much do you feel sorry?’”<sup>15</sup> Wherever it might have been, thousands followed where the Prophet led. With business ventures, it was no different. People followed Joseph to help him build his stores. Historian Mark Staker writes that on one occasion Newel K. Whitney “helped Joseph establish a store in Kirtland that operated in direct competition to his own establishment.”<sup>16</sup> Others followed Joseph to invest in his bank, buy land for the Church, travel on his steamboat, and make contributions to his temples. Even after the Prophet’s death, to follow Brother Brigham west was, in essence, to continue following Brother Joseph. And so it is with believing Latter-day Saints today.

The art of skillful delegation is a must for the business professional. The Prophet was highly effective in this area as well. Time and again, he had others represent him and carry out his ideas and plans. Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, and others brought pages of the manuscript of the

**J**oseph Smith demonstrated remarkable tenacity in seeking the publisher Egbert B. Grandin, whom he ultimately persuaded to print the Book of Mormon.

Book of Mormon to Grandin’s shop to be printed while Joseph was living in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Early in 1831 Bishop Edward Partridge purchased 63 acres of land from Jones H. Flournoy in Jackson County, Missouri, for a temple.<sup>17</sup> Brigham Young presided over the Twelve in Great Britain while Joseph was in Nauvoo. In addition to the spiritual conversion of thousands, financial or business-type activities were a significant part of that mission, particularly printing and emigration. With communication so limited, little could be done by means of lineal directives from the Prophet. Objectives were met by the Twelve functioning on their own as trusted stewards.<sup>18</sup> Be it as prophet or mayor, Joseph Smith was not afraid to let others act on his behalf when necessary.

The Prophet Joseph Smith had the fortitude to keep trying even after failure. He organized and was associated with a number of business enterprises which ultimately fell short of their intended objectives. In March 1832 the Prophet established a business partnership for the benefit of the Church and the support of its leaders. This venture was known as the United Firm and by several other names. Branches of the firm were to be organized in both Missouri and Ohio (see D&C 78:3; 82:12). This firm did not administer the law of consecration and stewardship as it is traditionally thought of—that was to be done by the bishops and would involve all who fell under their stewardship. The United Firm, on the other hand, was comprised of a relatively few, perhaps a dozen individuals. Staker has provided some excellent insights into the role Newel K.



Whitney played in the United Firm.<sup>19</sup> Members of the order were to be governed by the principles of consecration being revealed through the Prophet at that time.<sup>20</sup> After not meeting expectation, the United Firm was subsequently dissolved in April 1834. Assets of the Firm were distributed among members of the group. One such transaction brought the Peter French Tavern to become the John Johnson Inn.<sup>21</sup> The Saints living the law of consecration and stewardship likewise fell short of what was expected and were rebuked by the Lord (see D&C 105:2–9). These were set-backs, but Joseph didn't quit.

Karl Anderson tells of the Prophet's variety store in Kirtland, Ohio: "In an attempt to provide for his family and to meet his financial obligations, Joseph Smith opened a store in the latter part of 1836. He apparently operated the store for less than one year. Accounts written about the store indicate that his compassion for the Saints took precedence over profit. He apparently found it difficult to refuse many of the Saints who came into the store asking to purchase goods on credit. Financial problems connected with the store no doubt created further pressures on Joseph and Emma. After they left Kirtland, he was still settling debts connected with this business venture."<sup>22</sup> In later years, President Brigham Young expounded on how Joseph's compassion as store manager eventually translated into a lack of business success. Brother Brigham wryly noted the correlation between Joseph's willingness to extend credit and his being a true prophet. Those to whom credit was not extended tended to question the veracity of his calling: "Joseph was a first-rate fellow with them all the time, providing he never would ask them to pay him."<sup>23</sup>

Joseph's determination to keep trying is, perhaps, more admirable in the face of negative circumstances that were beyond his control. In the case of the Kirtland Safety Society debacle, significant factors outside of Joseph's sphere of influence contributed to the demise of that institution. On a national scale, Jack Larkin of Old Sturbridge Village has written: "In the winter of 1837–38, the onset of financial panic and business depression threw many thousands . . . out of work and brought on a season of deprivation and suffering for their families."<sup>24</sup> Moreover, biographer Wilson Sullivan points out

the following about the administration of U.S. president Martin Van Buren, who served during the Safety Society period of Church history: "Within days of his accession, President Van Buren faced a major national depression—the Panic of 1837—which was to plague his entire administration. . . . The nation paid a price for wildcat banks. A speculative orgy and the disappearance of sound banking principles followed."<sup>25</sup> Thus the Kirtland Safety Society failed in a climate where numerous other similar institutions likewise went under. Whatever Joseph's misjudgments might have been, the failure of the bank cannot be blamed on him alone.

It is true that Joseph moved ahead with his bank without a charter, thus creating his "anti-bank." That decision has generated considerable criticism of his actions. It is of interest that Dale Adams concludes that even with a charter, the Kirtland Bank would likely have failed during the economic turmoil of 1837–42. "At best, a charter would have allowed the bank to survive a few months longer, to close without raising a flurry of lawsuits and apostasy, and to be known by posterity as a simple business failure rather than a shady venture."<sup>26</sup> With regard to accusations made against the Prophet's integrity, historian Marvin Hill makes this observation: "We found that [such] charges were made on insufficient evidence and without an understanding of the economic forces operating in Kirtland. . . . Joseph sustained larger personal losses here than did any other person, so that in no sense did he risk other people's money where he would not risk his own. Joseph was a capitalist, but an honest one."<sup>27</sup>

Joseph came up short when he tried his hand at the hotel business in Nauvoo. When the Mansion House was



Right: Restored Red Brick Store.





**T**he 1837 onset of financial panic and business depression caused thousands to lose work and caused the demise of the Kirtland Safety Society.

constructed, the intent was that the Smith family operate it as a hotel. But, William Mulder explains, the whole endeavor “proved too great a burden; consequently, the Prophet, pressed by debt and harassed by lawsuits, rented the Mansion and stables to Ebenezer Robinson, who planned to run them as a public house, with three rooms reserved for the Prophet and with board provided for his family and his horses.”<sup>28</sup>

Throughout his life, Joseph found himself involved with a number of other projects. These include a printing enterprise, co-ownership of a steamboat,<sup>29</sup> land development, a railroad, and a project to dig a canal down Main Street in Nauvoo. He served as commissioner of the Nauvoo Agricultural and Manufacturing Association (NA&MA) for a time.<sup>30</sup> Some of these projects were successful; some were not. Those critical of the Prophet and his business efforts would do well to recall the failings of an Abraham Lincoln or a Thomas Edison. Not only do we tolerate their failures, we honor these heroes because of them.

One of the more unusual business efforts undertaken by the Prophet was a trip to look for treasure that, according to a Church member, had been buried in the cellar of a home in Salem, Massachusetts. This occurred in the summer of 1836, a period when indebtedness incurred from purchasing land and building the Kirtland Temple was weighing heavily upon Joseph and the Church. The information had been given enough credence to merit the efforts of Joseph Smith, his brother Hyrum, and several others to travel from Kirtland to Salem, a journey of some 650 miles.<sup>31</sup> Arriving in early August, Joseph Smith and his associates rented a home on Union Street in Salem.<sup>32</sup> On August 6, 1836, the Prophet received a revelation that is now section 111 of the Doctrine and Covenants in which Joseph was reassured that “I, the Lord am not displeased with this journey, notwithstanding your follies” (D&C 111:1). The group never did find the treasure that was supposed to have been buried there. But they were told that there were “more treasures than one” in that city. Five years later, a branch of some one hundred members was organized in Salem under the direction of Erastus Snow.<sup>33</sup>

The Prophet Joseph Smith was not ignorant of his debts and had deep concern for his financial liabilities. On September 23, 1835, the Prophet Joseph recorded the following in his own hand: “This day my soul has desired the salvation of Brother Ezra Thayer, also Brother Noah Packard. [He] came to my house and let the chapel committee have one thousand dollars, by loan, for the building the house of the Lord; Oh may God bless him with an hundred fold even of the things of Earth, for this righteous act. My heart is full of desire today to be blessed of the God of Abraham, with prosperity until I will be able to pay all my debts; for it is the delight of my soul to be honest. Oh Lord that thou knowest right well. Help me and I will give to the poor.”<sup>34</sup>

Joseph took steps to resolve his debts. After fleeing Kirtland because of threats on his life, the Prophet sent Oliver Granger back to Ohio as his agent to settle unpaid debts.<sup>35</sup> Much of Joseph’s life was in upheaval. He himself once said, “Deep water is what I am wont to swim in” (D&C 127:2). In this regard, we are gaining some new insights from workers on the massive Joseph Smith Papers project who have informally noted that the Prophet may have been involved in some 200 court cases during his lifetime.<sup>36</sup> As a consequence of all he went through, Joseph was forced to declare insolvency or bankruptcy on April 18, 1842, in Carthage, Illinois. LDS historian Glen M. Leonard explains: “Years of losses brought on by constant moves and harassment complicated the Prophet’s financial life.” Joseph listed his debt at being \$73,066.38 with assets and collectibles estimated at under \$20,000.<sup>37</sup> Finally and sadly, Joseph had financial problems even after his death in that he left a staggering debt to his widow, Emma.<sup>38</sup>

The business-related achievements and failures of Joseph Smith number far beyond the examples listed above. Some of the Prophet’s business projects were never proven to be either successes or failures because he didn’t live long enough to see them through. One of these would be the Nauvoo House. This enterprise was initiated by the Prophet as a result of a revelation that is now section 124 of the Doctrine and Covenants. It was intended that a hotel on the banks of the Mississippi River on the south





end of Main Street be constructed in tandem with the Nauvoo Temple. However, it was barely to ground level when the Prophet and the Patriarch were killed. The Nauvoo House was never completed as originally intended. Speaking of the uncompleted Nauvoo House, George Givens offers this sentiment: "This hotel was one of Joseph's dreams, and its remains are today another monument to the Prophet's vision and dreams cut short."<sup>39</sup>

In Mormonism, while he was alive, Joseph was the center of it all—spiritual and temporal. An attempt to separate the two distorts one's understanding of the Prophet's story. To acknowledge the failure of the Red Brick Store but ignore its spiritual meaning and motivation to the Saints would be unfortunate. To look only at the religious significance of the Nauvoo Temple but fail to recognize what that project meant to the city's economy would likewise be short-sighted. One must not only look at Joseph in his prophetic role as the chief force behind building the House of the Lord. One must also acknowledge his unparalleled ability to raise the necessary capital to make it all possible. Both aspects are part of the man. Neither is mutually exclusive of the other. To recognize these insights is to better understand Joseph Smith—truly a businessman. ▣

Kenneth R. Mays has been an instructor for the Church Education System for the past 27 years and is currently teaching at the Salt Lake University Institute adjacent to the University of Utah. Through his personal interest in Church history he has contributed over 1800 images and metadata for the "Religious Education Archive Image Collection" found at BYU website: <http://relarchive.byu.edu>.

Below: Reconstructed ashery and sawmill in Kirtland Flats. These structures were originally built by Newel K. Whitney and were eventually part of the United Firm. The reconstructed ashery is the only one of its kind in the United States. Red Brick Store, Kirtland Safety Society note and ashery photos by author, Kenneth R. Mays (6–9).



## Notes

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- 21 See also Jessee 277; Donald Quayle Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, *Far West Record* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 45–48; Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith: A Historical and Biographical Commentary of the Doctrine and Covenants* (Provo, Utah: Seventy's Mission Bookstore, c1981, 1980), 167–68.
- 22 Karl Ricks Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 48.
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- 25 Wilson Sullivan in Michael Beschloss, ed., *The American Heritage Illustrated History of the Presidents* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2000), 120.
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- 28 William Mulder, "Nauvoo Observed," *BYU Studies* 32, nos. 1 and 2 (Winter and Spring 1992): 95.
- 29 HC 5:386.
- 30 Leonard, 156.
- 31 HC 2:463–64.
- 32 Berrett, *Sacred Places*, 1:24.
- 33 Cook, *Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 221.
- 34 Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 82–83.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 511; D&C 117:12–15.
- 36 Max H. Parkin, CES in-service meeting, Jan. 21, 2005.
- 37 Leonard, 168.
- 38 Linda King Newell and Vallen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 199–200.
- 39 George W. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo: Everyday Life in the City of Joseph* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 88.

Visuals: Joseph Knight Sr. delivering provisions to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, art by Paul Mann (4–5). Grandin printing complex photo by Craig Dimond (6), © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



# From STOREHOUSE to

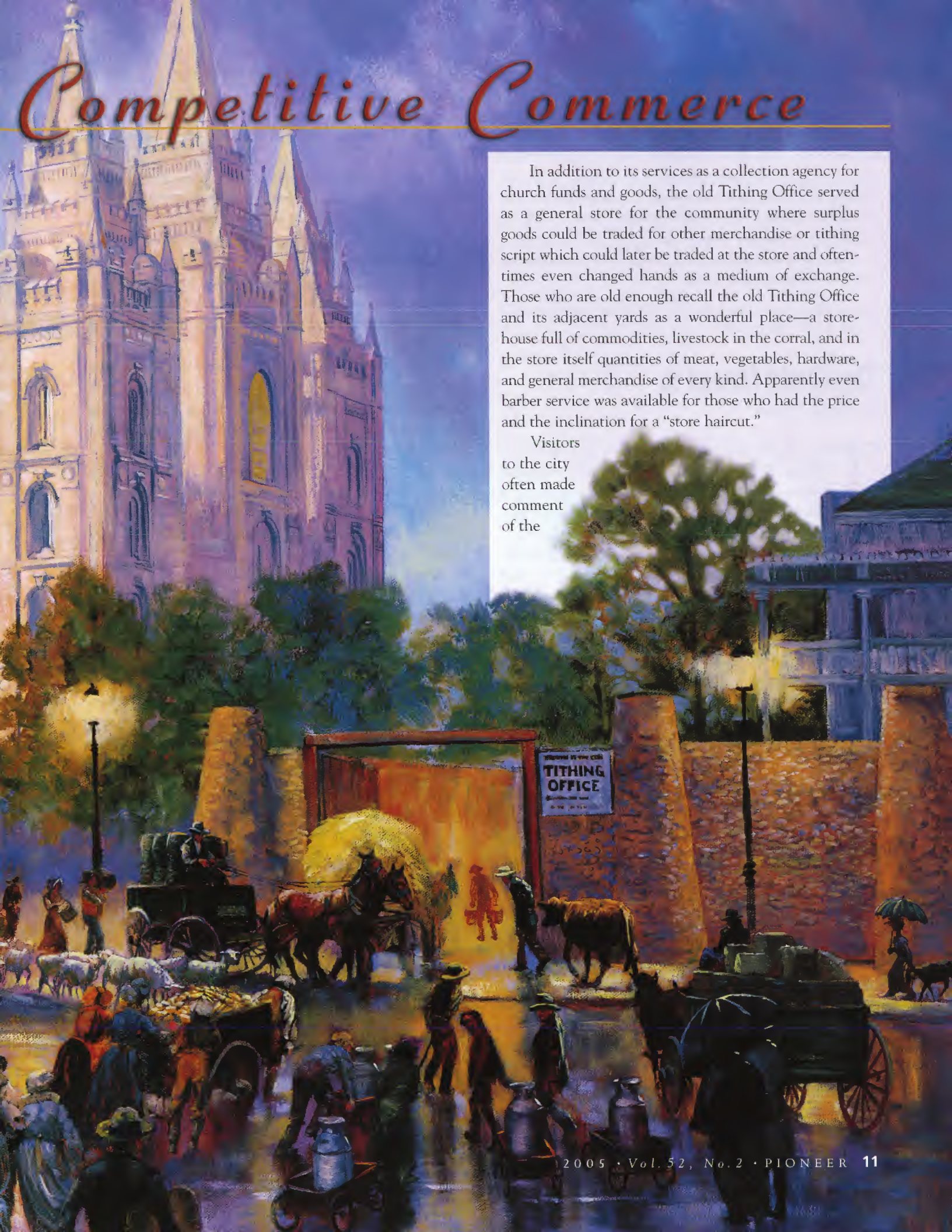
## The Deseret Store

by A. R. Mortensen

On Saturday, April 6, 1850, it is recorded in the records of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that: "The erection of a large storehouse was suggested in which to store provisions, etc., so that the needy might be supplied with necessities without delay. Such a storehouse was commenced and completed the same year." This was the beginning of the three-story building and its surrounding cobblestone wall—[a pioneer landmark that] stood for more than fifty years on the corner of Salt Lake City's famous intersection, at Main and South Temple streets. The building

was referred to at various times as the Deseret Store, the General Tithing Office, and the home of one of Utah's pioneer newspapers. In reality, the General Tithing House was a long single-storied structure which ran north from the main building. The main structure with its double-decked porch faced south and served the purpose of offices and a printing establishment. To the north and east were located other structures and facilities for the use of the Presiding Bishop and the Tithing Office. As all the world knows, tithing even from ancient days was a device in the form of money, goods, and property collected for the support of the church. For many years after the arrival of the pioneers in Utah, money was very scarce, and so almost all tithing receipts were paid "in kind." The collection, the processing, the distribution, and the accounting for produce, livestock, —[even haystacks], and handicraft of every variety required considerable facilities and much good management.





# Competitive Commerce

In addition to its services as a collection agency for church funds and goods, the old Tithing Office served as a general store for the community where surplus goods could be traded for other merchandise or tithing script which could later be traded at the store and often-times even changed hands as a medium of exchange. Those who are old enough recall the old Tithing Office and its adjacent yards as a wonderful place—a storehouse full of commodities, livestock in the corral, and in the store itself quantities of meat, vegetables, hardware, and general merchandise of every kind. Apparently even barber service was available for those who had the price and the inclination for a “store haircut.”

Visitors to the city often made comment of the



Tithing Office and its activity, no doubt because it was a unique institution, at least in their experience. The noted British traveler Sir Richard Burton, who visited the home of the Saints and recorded his observations, noted that as he walked west from President Young's office toward the corner: "On the extreme west of the block, . . . lies the Tithing House and Deseret Store, a long narrow, upper-storied building, with cellars, store-rooms, receiving rooms, pay rooms and writing offices. [After] the harvest it is well stuffed with grains and cereals, which are taken instead of money payment." ▣

Source: "Main Street: Salt Lake City," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (July 1959): 274.

## The World Moves In

by Linda Sillitoe

**T**he day Mormon wagons entered the Salt Lake Valley, life therein began to change. Mountain streams turned in their courses at the command of shovels and spread their waters. Plows struck the soil now expected to yield the crops the newcomers sowed.

The settlers' first winter in the valley was mild yet difficult due to insufficient food, [but the] spring of 1848 brought relief and renewed energy. The settlers planted five thousand acres with corn, beets, onions, turnips, peas, beans, cucumbers, melons, squash, lettuce, and radishes, all from seed brought across the plains. Seed from winter wheat filled another nine thousand acres.

All summer immigrants streamed into the valley, where they were evaluated as to both needs and

skills, then sifted into the settlement plan. One list of Mormons leaving from Liverpool detailed occupations from accountants to engineers, ironmongers to masons, printers to cabinet makers, weavers and spinners to yeomen.<sup>1</sup>

The incoming Saints found a city in the making. The General Tithing Office acted as the valley's first bank and centralized the communal effort. Tithing scrip remunerated workers on public projects and was redeemed for merchandise in tithing stores. Both loans and savings could be managed through careful records kept in tithing books.

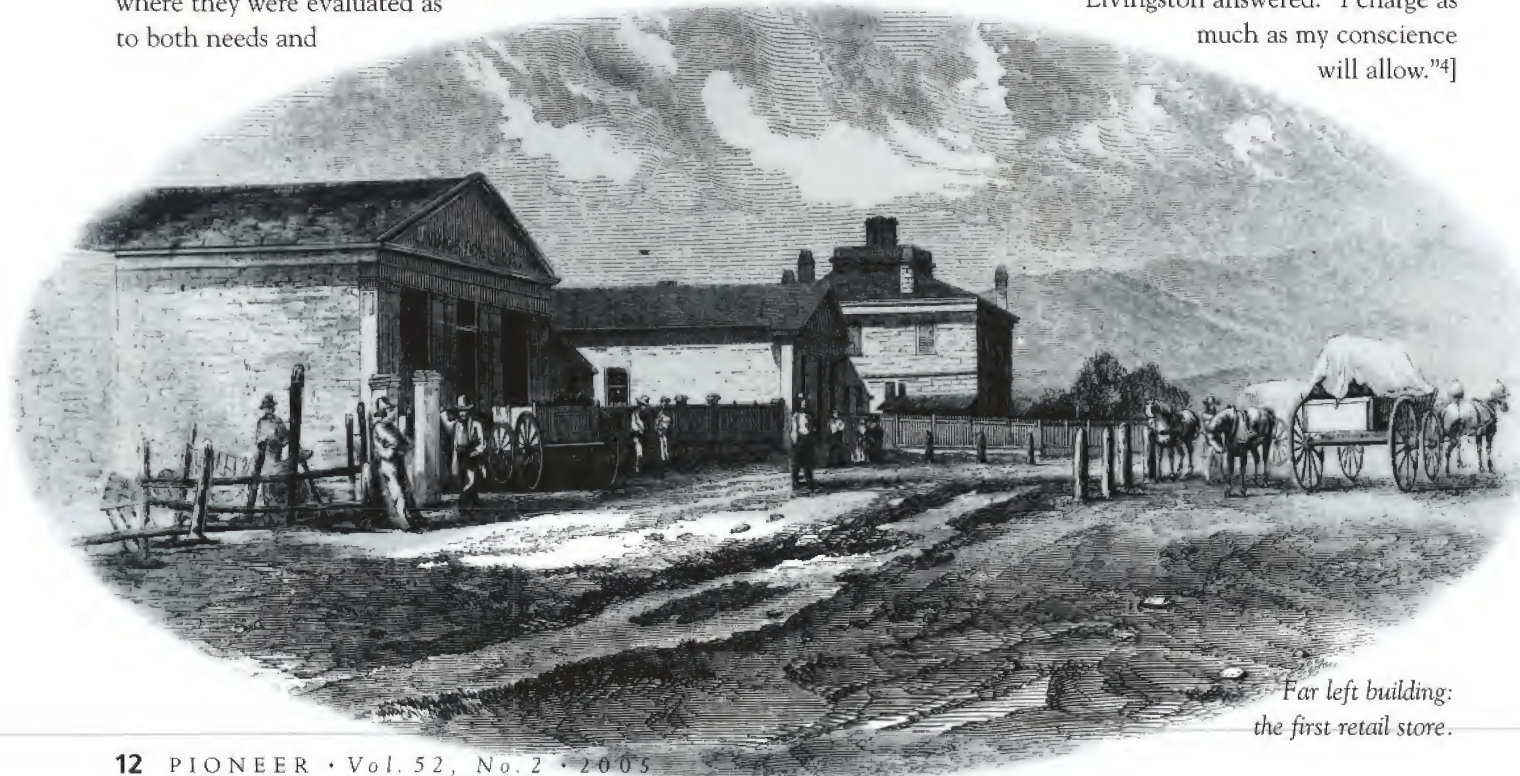
One historian called Great Salt Lake City an "instant city," for by its first anniversary it boasted a population of nearly five thousand.

[The Territory of Utah offered exceptional opportunities to merchants because the Mormons were essentially an agricultural people hoping to build a self-sustaining community. Consequently, all of the earliest merchants in Utah were non-Mormons.<sup>2</sup>]

[As] early as 1849 the first breach appeared in the doctrinal wall of self-sufficiency. Eastern goods became available when James A. Livingston and Charles A. Kinkead opened the first retail store . . . near where West High School would later stand.

[With goods valued at \$20,000, they established their store in the adobe house of John Pack in the Seventeenth Ward at the southwest corner of First North and West Temple. This location was convenient to Union Square, where many of the immigrants stopped temporarily upon arriving in the valley.<sup>3</sup> They were immediately successful and, when asked what profit they made on their sales,

Livingston answered: "I charge as much as my conscience will allow."<sup>4</sup>]



Far left building:  
the first retail store.





## *Hotel Utah Corner—1855*

*1-First Store in Utah, where Utah Hotel now stands 2-Tithing Office 3-Brigham Young's stables 4-The Mint where gold coins were made. 5-Deseret News Building 6-Brigham Young's first home 7-Lion House 8-Bee Hive House 9-City Wall*

[Silk, calico, and linen began replacing worn-out clothing and homespun, and saddles, tools, and household goods were a welcome sight. Ben Holladay procured surplus oxen and wagons from the army, hauled in \$70,000 worth of merchandise and sold it all. The following year he brought more than twice as much and retailed the goods with equal success.<sup>5]</sup>

[In 1850, Livingston and Kinkead erected the first store building on Main Street, about a third of a block south of the Council House then being built on the southwest corner of Main and South Temple. In this same year, the second mercantile firm, Holliday and Warner, set up business in Salt Lake City. They first opened up in a little adobe schoolhouse on Brigham Young's block just east of the Eagle Gate. William H. Hooper, who later became one of Utah's leading businessmen, was in charge of their business. Later this firm moved to the corner of South Temple and Richards Street, where now stands the Beneficial Life Insurance Building.

The third store in the city, and the second to be built on Main Street, was opened by John and Enoch Reese at about 125 South Main, where later Wells Fargo and Company was located. The fourth mercantile institution in Utah was opened by J. M. Homer and Company and for a brief time operated on land now the site of the Hotel Utah. This firm was succeeded by the company of William H. Hooper and Thomas S. Williams. They built the third store on Main Street, on land which Williams had received as his inheritance. It was located on the northeast corner of Main and First South, now occupied by the First Security Bank. In 1857 Williams sold his interest and the firm was changed to Hooper and Eldredge.<sup>6]</sup>

Young viewed these entrepreneurial efforts with a jaundiced eye, for outside merchants came only to make

money, not to build Zion. They paid no tithing for the common good and showed no inclination to enter the fold. To his followers, Young stressed self-sufficiency as gospel. "If they impoverished themselves to buy things that couldn't be provided within the territory, they would forever be the slaves of the gentiles."<sup>7]</sup>

Yet the market for eastern goods existed within the valley, for the imported items not only offered convenience but spoke of home and civilization. Brigham found his most thorough defeat, perhaps, in assaulting fashion. He protested trousers newly tailored with a front fly rather than a drop seat; he tried to persuade women to wear a plain "Deseret costume" as a daily uniform. All the while, Brigham's wives, especially the younger ones, set the standard of fashion as Great Salt Lake City offered increasing society and entertainment.

If non-Mormon merchants took advantage of the valley's consumers, Mormons saw the 15,000 goldseekers sprinting through town [in the year 1849] as a mobile windfall. These travelers were willing to pay greatly inflated prices for horses, mules, vegetables, and flour, and the Mormons were glad to charge whatever the market would sustain. Many who were California-bound also offered surplus wagons and harnesses at greatly reduced prices, a second boon. Young saw the Mormons' purpose in exploiting this situation as appropriate given their isolation and lofty goals; he saw the non-Mormon merchants' aim as purely selfish.

As [another] benefit, the gold rush brought business; blacksmiths, teamsters, wagonsmiths, laundresses, and millers were in high demand. Although Young turned his followers away from the gold rush to save their souls, gold mining in California actually "saved" the Saints financially.<sup>8]</sup>

Still, the outflowing currency, which Young estimated at \$500,000 between 1849 and 1852, rankled. He and the



church historian inspected the merchants' wagons as they were readied to travel East. The historian reported them loaded "with more gold dust than had come to the [church] mint that fall. In one box was as much gold as a man could carry and there was a box of silver that required three men to lift it into the wagon."<sup>9</sup>

Freighting quickly became a big business during the 1850s. Ben Holladay's company grew to a thriving enterprise that would later lead to stagecoaches and the backing of the Pony Express. In turn, Young established the Brigham Young Express and Carrying Company, offering direct competition. In addition, a toll was exacted as early as 1849 from travelers entering the valley through Parley's Canyon.

More than money lay at issue as this situation developed. The valley's natural role as a crossroads was proving a disadvantage as well as an advantage. As Salt Lake became the only major city between the Mississippi River and the West Coast, it provided a natural stopping-off place for travelers; the Overland Trail itself attracted commerce. "Through traffic" was one thing in the leadership's eyes, and outsiders moving in on the market quite another. Yet by 1854, at least twenty-two non-Mormon merchants did business in the valley.

[The earliest Jewish merchants who came to and remained in Utah were Nicholas S. Ransohoff, who came early in 1858, and Samuel Kahn, who arrived a year later. Julius Gerson Brooks had come in the summer of 1854 but, after remaining about three years, had gone to California, Oregon, and Idaho

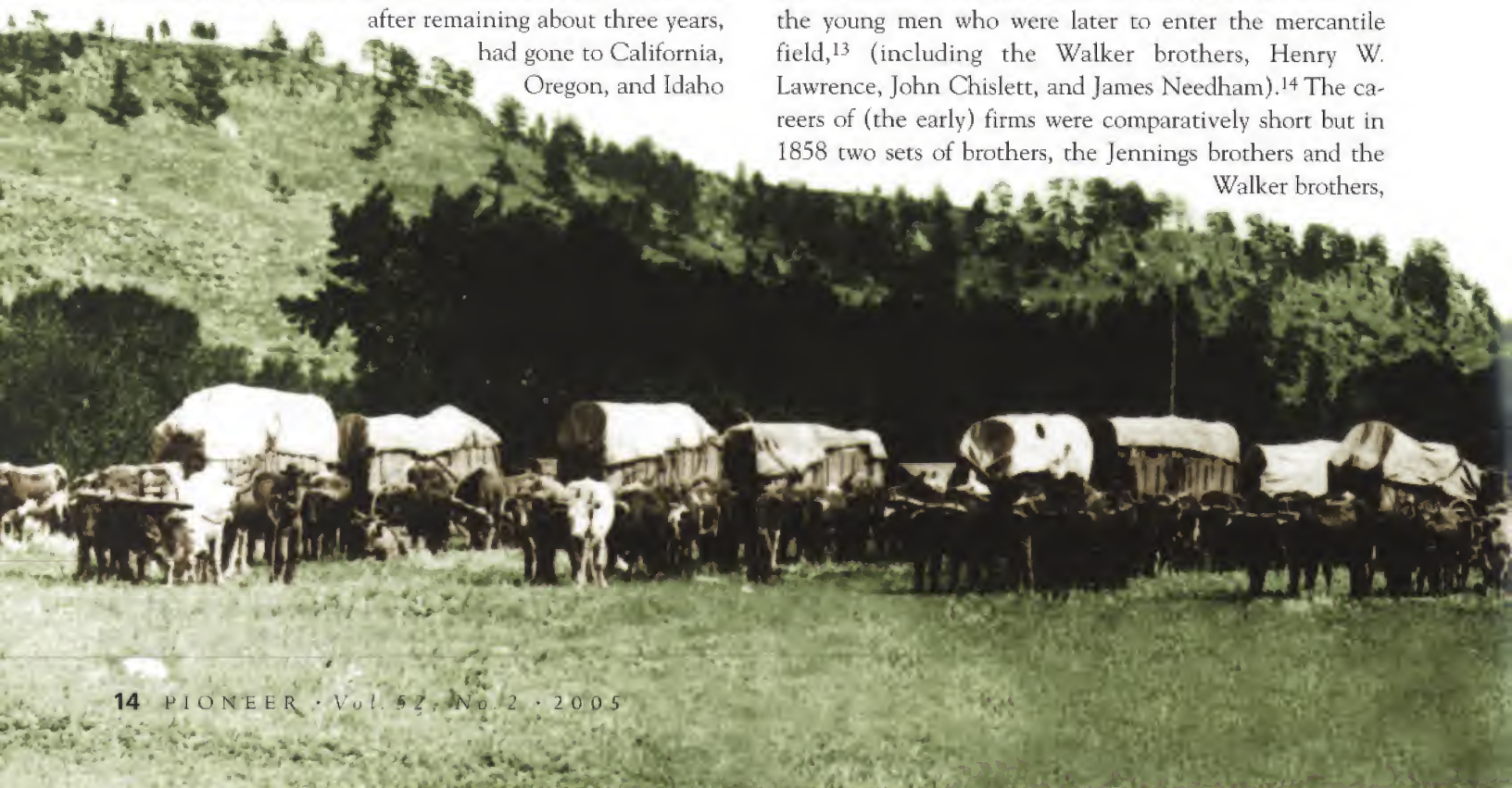
before returning to Salt Lake City to settle permanently.<sup>10</sup> Ransohoff operated not only as a merchant but also as a freighter of goods across the plains. For a time he enjoyed a close relationship with the Mormon authorities and engaged in several business transactions with Brigham Young. Kahn also engaged in freighting and established one of the largest wholesale grocery concerns in the Territory.

It was not, however, until the mid-sixties that most of the Jewish merchants arrived in Utah, for it was then that the increase in population and wealth and the development of the mining industry attracted them from California and Nevada.<sup>11</sup>

The west side of Main Street continued for many years to be the principal center of business activity. The firm of Livingston and Bell, successors to Livingston and Kinkead, built the old Constitution Building, the first two-story commercial structure in Utah, on the ground where the latter firm had originally opened up in business on Main Street. The present Constitution Building, still standing, thus

occupies the oldest commercial site on Salt Lake's oldest business thoroughfare. South of the old Constitution Building was the firm of Gilbert and Gerrish.<sup>12</sup> Continuing on south was the store of William Nixon, (the first Mormon merchant) who had come to Salt Lake from England, where he had joined the Church. He was called the "father of Utah merchants" for under him were trained the young men who were later to enter the mercantile field,<sup>13</sup> (including the Walker brothers, Henry W. Lawrence, John Chislett, and James Needham).<sup>14</sup> The careers of (the early) firms were comparatively short but in 1858 two sets of brothers, the Jennings brothers and the Walker brothers,

**F**reighting quickly  
became a big  
business during the 1850s.  
... Ben Holladay procured  
surplus oxen and wagons  
from the army, hauled in  
\$70,000 worth of merchandise and sold it all.







## Nicholas Siegfried Ransohoff

by Leon L. Watters

opened businesses which were not only destined to survive but which brought to their owners the title of "merchant princes." Both of these families were Mormons of English descent and they maintained elaborate homes and gardens in Salt Lake City which were comparable to those of English gentry.<sup>15]</sup>

[In 1858], the Utah Expedition, led by Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston, . . . moved through the silent, empty city and established Camp Floyd beyond Salt Lake County's southern border. President James Buchanan declared a "free and full pardon" for whatever defiance the government had perceived, and the siege ended without violence or destruction.<sup>16]</sup>

Despite this peaceful conclusion to what had seemed impending catastrophe, change arrived along with the army, for Camp Floyd rooted the non-Mormon presence in the Great Basin.

[During most of the decade of the fifties businesses grew by ones and twos, but beginning in the later years of the period and continuing on into the early and middle sixties, business enterprises grew rapidly both in numbers and size. It was during these years that Utah's first millionaire, William Jennings, built his Eagle Emporium on the southwest corner of Main and First South.]<sup>17]</sup>

During the 1860s the Salt Lake Valley felt the impact of a resident army even more strongly than in the few years previous. Camp Floyd looked to Salt Lake City as a hub of business and entertainment. So often did the soldiers ride their steeds along Seventeenth West, sometimes driving cattle before them, that residents complained bitterly of property damage. To stop the complaints, the troops built a fence of California redwood, which changed the street's name to Redwood Road.<sup>18]</sup>

The soldiers' visits spurred trade in prostitution downtown and encouraged the sale of liquor to the point that Main Street was nicknamed Whiskey Street.<sup>19]</sup> [This

In the contemporaneous records of the pioneer period in Utah the name Nicholas Siegfried Ransohoff appears with great frequency, indicating [his] importance in the business life of the community. He and his brother, Elias, were born in Westphalia, Germany, and came to America about 1845.

The precise date of his coming to Utah is not known but it must have been some time previous to 1859 since letters were awaiting him at the post-office in Salt Lake City in November of that year.<sup>1]</sup> Beadle, writing of the entrance of Johnston's army in July, 1858, mentions

him: "The entrance of Johnston's army . . . was followed by a season of unusual fruitfulness. . . . A prominent firm of those days was Ransohoff & Co., long the leading Jewish firm, who built the best stone store in the city.<sup>2]</sup> . . . He had extensive dealings with Brigham Young, who was for a time on the best of terms with the Gentile merchants. When Johnston's army left, he [Ransohoff] advanced Young the sum of \$30,000 with which to purchase army pork."<sup>3]</sup>

In the years 1864–1865, Ransohoff & Company dealt very extensively in supplies much needed in the Territory. Theirs was the largest advertisement in the local Mormon newspaper. Ransohoff was one of the earliest Jews, if not the first, to freight goods across the Plains from the East, a venture attendant with many risks. Inclement weather or attacks by the Indians might cost the loss of a wagon train and the financial ruin of the freighter. Nicholas Ransohoff himself appears to have crossed the Plains on several occasions, a trip involving considerable hardship and danger. It is understandable that freighting was considered highly speculative and this, in some measure, justified the high profits demanded for the merchandise so transported. At the height of his success Ransohoff established branches of their business at Ogden and Corinne.<sup>4]</sup>

Ransohoff's friendship with the head of the Mormon Church was rewarded when, at the formation of the Zion's Co-operative Mercantile Institution, his was the only Gentile [non-Mormon] business purchased by them.<sup>5]</sup> ▀

Source: Leon L. Watters, *The Pioneer Jews of Utah* (New York: American Jewish Historical Society, 1952), 126–27.

### Notes

1 Salt Lake City *Valley Tan*, Nov. 12, 1858.

2 J. H. Beadle, *Life in Utah* (Philadelphia, 1870), 199; the Salt Lake City *Vedette*, Jan. 11, 1864, and April 6, 1864.

3 Beadle, 200; Salt Lake *Telegraph*, July 16, 1864.

4 E. W. Tullidge, *History of Utah*, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City, 1886), 163.

5 *Ibid.*, see chapter 6, "Commercial Development," 56.



military force remained until the outbreak of the Civil War, only to be followed by another.]

The Overland Mail and Overland Telegraph provided an excuse for sending another federal contingent to the valley, even though Young insisted the Mormons could guard the new communications system. Already he had lent significant support to the stringing of 1,600 miles of telegraph line. By 1865 the Deseret Telegraph would be under construction, and a school of telegraphy would open in Salt Lake City, attracting a student body of young men from towns all along its proposed route.

Nevertheless, President Abraham Lincoln called for volunteers, and Colonel Patrick E. Connor was appointed to head the Third California Volunteer Infantry. Advised to keep an eye on the Mormons as well as protect the wire, Connor marched his troops across the Jordan River at the White Bridge (at about North Temple Street) in October 1862. He opined that they entered a "community of traitors, murders, fanatics, and whores."<sup>20</sup>

Connor . . . established Camp Douglas (named for the late Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, whom Lincoln had defeated) on the eastern foothills above the site designated for the university.

Juanita Brooks further defines Colonel Connor as having been called "the first Gentile in Utah," and indeed the first Gentile of power. "He was the first to use an electric light; first to operate a steamboat on the lake; first to publish a daily paper; and, most important, first to encourage the development of the mineral resources of Utah. To fill their time and keep them out of the city, he directed his men to prospect for metals and advertised their findings through his paper, *The Daily Vedette*, later the *Daily Union Vedette*. This brought in prospectors and miners, and men with capital."<sup>21</sup>

[After the organization of Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution in 1868–69, Jennings purchased stock in the new institution, and his Emporium became the first home of the Z.C.M.I. William S. Godbe opened a store on the southeast corner of Main and First South, and in the early seventies built his three-story Exchange Building, presently the site of Montgomery Ward.

Contemporaneous with merchants like Kimball and



**M**ormon settlers promoted good mail and telegraph service to unify their society.

**But these networks of transportation and communication . . . worked against the inward-focused tendencies of their economic ideals.**

Lawrence, Jennings, Godbe, and others, the famous Walker brothers branched out for themselves and opened their establishment in the block to the south of Godbe's corner. In rapid succession other businesses, large and small, began to fill in both sides of the street, and Salt Lake City's Main Street became assured of its destiny as the commercial center of the Intermountain West.

May 10, 1869, was a great day for the nation (with the) "wedding of the rails" at Promontory Summit at the north end of the Great Salt Lake. Historically, the completion of the transcontinental railroad marked the end of the pioneer period.

Under the impetus of the railroad important changes took place. Great mercantile houses grew up, replacing the subsistence economy of an earlier day. Large quantities of "store goods," which heretofore could be purchased only at horrendous prices, if at all, rapidly became available. The railroad also made practicable the development of the mineral wealth of the region, previously only hoped for.<sup>22]</sup>

Overall, the Mormon vision succeeded during the first decade of settlement, for growth, communalism, and a religious lifeway prevailed. A thriving city, a county with expanding settlements, and multiplying social, intellectual, and cultural opportunities all boasted the value of planning and cooperation. The Salt Lake Valley had become a busy western crossroads and a religious center whose influence would continue to expand to many nations, drawing people toward Zion.

Nevertheless, Brigham Young's most formidable battles lay ahead, not behind him; they involved neither arrows, guns, nor cannons. The most dangerous enemies were those who appreciated the Great Basin, he would find—as had tribal leaders and earlier peoples before them. New neighbors brought their own ideas, claims, and rights, their own vision of how the Territory ought to run.

Glen Leonard sums up this end to isolation: "When the Mormon settlers built wagon roads and railroads they intended to encourage immigration of church converts and interaction among church members. They promoted good mail and telegraph service to unify their society. But these networks of transportation and communication, this reaching outward, worked against the inward-focused



tendencies of their economic ideals. Imported goods competed with poorer quality local manufactures, and competitive commerce smothered cooperative economics. The transcontinental railroad worked not only to smooth the inward flow of Mormon converts but also of gentile (non-Mormon) miners and merchants. This leavening weakened both the resolve and the ability to nurture an agrarian, self-sufficient cooperative community."<sup>23</sup> ▣

*Excerpts from Linda Sillitoe, History of Salt Lake County (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society; Salt Lake County Commission, 1996), chapters 2-3, except the material in brackets.*

#### Notes

- 1 Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 44.
- 2 Leon L. Watters, *The Pioneer Jews of Utah* (New York: American Jewish Historical Society, 1952), 37.
- 3 "Main Street: Salt Lake City," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (July 1959): 275.
- 4 Cited in Sarah Hollister Harris, *An Unwritten Chapter of Salt Lake* (New York, 1901), privately printed.
- 5 Arrington, 80.
- 6 "Main Street," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 276-77.
- 7 Cited in Dale L. Morgan, *The Great Salt Lake* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1947), 288.
- 8 Arrington, 66.

9 *Ibid.*, 82.

10 See Watters, 123-30.

11 *Ibid.*, 43.

12 "Main Street," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 276.

13 Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah* (Salt Lake City, 1892), 1:499.

14 "Main Street," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 277.

15 T. B. H. Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain Saints* (New York, 1873), 622; Samuel Bowles, *Across the Continent: A Summer's Journey to the Rocky Mountains, the Mormons, and the Pacific States, with Speaker Colfax* (Springfield, Mass.: S. Bowles & Company; New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1865), 267-68; *Deseret News*, July 20, 1935.

16 Cited in John S. McCormick, *Salt Lake City: The Gathering Place* (Woodland Hills, Calif.: Windsor Publications, 1980), 25.

17 "Main Street," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 278.

18 Rosa Vida Black, *Under Granger Skies: History of Granger 1849-1963* (Salt Lake City: Granger Stake Relief Society, 1963), 2.

19 Thomas G. Alexander and James B. Allen, *Mormons and Gentiles: A History of Salt Lake City* (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Co., 1984), 66.

20 *Deseret, 1776-1976: A Bicentennial Illustrated History of Utah* by the *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Co., 1975), 111.

21 Juanita Brooks, *The History of the Jews in Utah and Idaho* (Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1973), 45.

22 "Main Street," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 278.

23 Glen M. Leonard, *A History of Davis County* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society; [Farmington]: Davis County Commission, 1999), 132.

Visuals: "Prove Me Now Herewith," © by Glen S. Hopkinson (10-11). Historical photos (12-17) © courtesy Utah State Historical Society.



### *West Side Main St. at 2nd So.*

*About 1870*

*City Drug Store - now Continental Bank site. Old Walker Bank Corner - Now Anderson Jewelry Store.*





# THE *Merchants*

by Jenni Weiler

*"There is a class of men who are here to pick the pockets of the Latter-day Saints and then use the means they get from us to bring about our destruction. . . . We should be of one heart and mind, and be determined not to put means in their power to create trouble for us."*<sup>1</sup>

—Brigham Young

Brigham Young slammed his fist onto his desk. Frustrated, he looked down at his hand. It was calloused, worn and strong, much like himself. He toiled along with his brethren and the broken fingernails and swollen knuckles proved it. Brigham was used to grasping onto what he thought was right and holding tight until it was. He was a man with a mind of a bulldog. Once he grabbed hold of an idea, he didn't like letting go. Some thought of him as stubborn, dogmatic and close-minded. But those who shook the determined man's hand felt the physical power of his grip and the spiritual strength of the prophet of the Lord.

The kingdom felt slippery right now. It was this awful trade business. How he abhorred merchants and the dependence their kind fostered among the Saints. He'd always preached self-sufficiency and independence and warned the Saints to stay away from merchandising. But the Saints fell short of making everything they needed or wanted and the non-Mormon traders were taking advantage of this frontier community by charging outrageous prices. Why sugar was selling for an unprecedented \$1.00 per pound! It wasn't going to get better either. With the railroad approaching completion, thousands more high-priced articles were bound to arrive in the valley.

It wasn't just high prices that irked the prophet. Cash was pouring out the valley, taken away in the pockets of gentile merchants. He agreed with the *Deseret News* editor, Albert Carrington. Just last week he'd read the scathing editorial. "The merchants are parasites who have grown or are growing fat of the people. They come here on the wing, remain long enough to become comparatively rich, and depart with what they have acquired. These merchants impudently advertised that they can sell cheaper because they do not have to pay tithing! It is about time that this class of people should get the 'cut direct' and be 'let severely alone.'"<sup>2</sup>



# of Babylon

Brigham liked the editorial. Too many were getting rich on the Saints and taking cash away from the kingdom. But Carrington's further opinion unsettled the prophet. "We are, or ought to be, perfectly competent to do our own trading . . . and we can use the profits for building up ourselves, our Territory and the kingdom of God."<sup>3</sup> Brigham clenched his hands together and bowed his head. What he had to do would go against much of what he had preached from the beginning. But the Saints had to control the financial future of the valley. Brigham raised his head. He would do it at general conference.

In the 1860s, Salt Lake City was an important commercial hub of the West. It served as a supply station for miners, immigrant trains, and soldiers stationed in camps like Fort Douglas. These people needed supplies and most had cash to buy them with. They headed to Main Street, "a crazy quilt of gaily painted buildings, and shacks already rotting and falling apart from neglect" to do their business.<sup>4</sup>

Most of the merchants were Gentiles because Young did everything he could to limit any economic interaction with the eastern states, especially among the Mormons. He abhorred trade and chastised Mormons who would profiteer from their brothers. His dogmatic pursuit of the supreme goal of self-sufficiency demanded that Mormons stay out of mercantile operations and most did.

Mormons benefited from the traffic in goods afforded by





non-Mormon mercantile institutions such as the Auerbach brothers. "Because cash was scarce for Utah farmers, they traded their homegrown and handmade items for 'state's' goods from the non-Mormon merchants. This same produce was then sold to soldiers or immigrants for the cash that allowed merchants to ship in more goods."<sup>5</sup>

But demand for manufactured and finished goods by Mormons and non-Mormons resulted in high prices. And without competition from the Mormon community, enterprising non-Mormons filled the breach.

Eventually it was too much for some Saints to sit by and watch all that money fill outsider pockets. By 1864, several Mormons has risked the wrath of President Young and opened their own establishments. "Apparently to their eyes the issue was between Mormon control and non-Mormon control of trade rather than between self-sufficiency and trade."<sup>6</sup>

Opposition to the gentile "merchants of Babylon" grew among the Saints and Church leadership. Many of these non-Mormons, offended by Brigham Young's attitude, soon became bitter enemies of the Church. Many were suspected of using their influence to promote anti-Mormon bias throughout the nation. Furious that those profiteering from the Saints would use their position to promote malice, Brigham Young did a complete turn-about. In 1865 he spoke in general conference urging trade for the first time!

"I wish the brethren, in all our settlements, to buy goods they must have and let every one of the Latter-Day Saints, male and female, decree in their hearts that they will buy of nobody else but their own faithful brethren,"<sup>7</sup>

War was declared from the podium of the Tabernacle and a full-fledged boycott against the gentile firms began. Brigham's message was clearly, "These are a class of men who are here to pick the pockets of the Latter-Day Saints."<sup>8</sup>

"Cease to buy from them the gewgaws and frivolous things they bring here to sell to us for our money and means—means that we should have here. For as merchandising has been generally conducted here, instead of having our means to perform public works, it has been borne away by our enemies by the million."<sup>9</sup>

The boycott's influence was effective. By December 1866, there were 23 non-Mormon firms that threw in the towel and closed up, but not before offering to sell out to the Church. Brigham Young declined the offer stating with indifference, it mattered not if they stayed or left.

Mormon merchants were quick to take advantage of the new market and lack of competition. Unfortunately, the law of supply and demand led some Mormons to realize profits of 500 percent on goods sold. When he saw that the evils of trade were affecting his people he spoke harshly of those who "could not be honest and do

as they do, taking such profits from an innocent, confiding, poor industrious people. . . . If they do not repent, they will go to hell."<sup>10</sup>

Brigham Young knew the Church needed to control trade in the Salt Lake Valley, especially with the looming approach of the railroad. The boycott proved the Mormons had the power to direct it. But something else was needed to level the playing field so that wealth could be spread around and kept from the hands of the few. President Young was opposed to classes of wealth and status among his people. He had an idea, and in 1868 he went to the Tabernacle podium again.

Cooperation had often been a hot topic of debate among the Saints, and the dialogue intensified during the boycott. Speaker after speaker at conference extolled the virtues and benefits of cooperative

buying and finally, Young asked the Saints, "Are we of one heart and mind on this subject?" And then in the event that not all were yet convinced he added, "My feelings are that every man and woman who will not obey this counsel shall be severed from the Church." He called for a vote asking, "Let all who feel as I do lift up his right hand."<sup>11</sup> Not surprising, the vote was unanimous.

In October of 1868, business and Church leaders from across the Utah Territory met to support the resolution of establishing a cooperative wholesale store. It would be the "People's Store" and eventually be called Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution. These leaders set out to convince people to support the Church's plan for cooperation.

They met in town meetings and weren't afraid to preach from the pulpit. The message was essentially the same: "(1) The Saints should not trade with 'outsiders'; (2) a cooperative wholesale house, or 'Parent Institution' should be established in Salt Lake City which would purchase all goods imported into the Territory for sale; (3) cooperative retailing establishments should be established in each ward and settlement, and these should patronize the parent wholesale house in Salt Lake City and also control the trade within their respective communities; (4) the retail stores should use their profits in establishing local shops and factories which could supply the people's wants."<sup>12</sup>

**"I wish the brethren, in all  
our settlements, to buy  
goods they must have and  
let every one of the Latter-  
Day Saints, male and  
female, decree in their  
hearts that they will buy of  
nobody else but their own  
faithful brethren."  
—Brigham Young, 1865**





Early interior of ZCMI.

The "People's Store" was for all who wished to invest. "The small investor could buy even a single share for five dollars and be part of the cooperative enterprise. Many paid for shares with eggs, bushels of tomatoes or other produce. Brigham Young stated, "Call on the brethren and sisters who are poor and tell them to put in their five dollars or their twenty-five, and let those who have capital stand back and give the poor the advantage of this quick trading."<sup>13</sup>

The cooperative was meant to improve the economics of the Saints, but it also was designed to bring about the spiritual benefits of unification. Charles Smith records his thoughts in his journal after attending such a meeting. He writes, "They spoke upon this matter of our trading with those who were not of us. He shewed the advantages that would arise from our cooperating putting our means together to do away with this monopoly that is in our midst that was continually draining our substance. This movement was intended to make us more united to bring us closer together, according to the pattern of the Gospel."

The reaction to the Church's plan was universally favorable and enthusiasm was so high that in a few days the proposed wholesale house became a reality, formally organized and funded.<sup>14</sup>

Many merchants were willing to sell out their own businesses to join in the venture. This joining of forces of local and powerful merchant firms became the ZCMI co-operative. The cooperative began shipping products from the East and controlled prices on imported goods. ZCMI was immediately successful with its shelves filled with state's goods and those manufactured at home.

Success was virtually guaranteed by the monopoly ZCMI created almost as soon as it opened its doors. The co-op's first logo was a symbol of the unified merchants. It contained the familiar "all-seeing eye" with the words "Holiness to the Lord" written above it. It was a sign to the

community of the unity of the Mormon people and identified the stores joined in the association. The seal clearly symbolized the mission of the store was to protect the Saints from the encroaching power of the Gentiles and was an official stamp of loyalty, a stamp of approval of Church leaders. Signs with the all-seeing eye marked stores up and down Main Street and visually joined the many departments of the new store as one.

Mormon firms that chose not to unite were ostracized, and although many merchants rallied to the cause, support of the parent company was not universal.<sup>15</sup>

A great revolution in the economy of the Territory was expected, and by 1870, over 150 local co-operatives had been established throughout the region. Wherever branch stores were found they were supplied by ZCMI Wholesale with the best local and imported goods available with uniform prices throughout the system. Uniform prices were established so when a person came to the parent store he would be charged the same prices as the local store charged. The small farmer and the person buying in bulk would be treated the same.

Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution began as a wholesaler and eventually became a successful retail institution. Its remarkable progress was the result of enthusiasm and broad-based support of the people, a diversified

Z. C. M. I. PAGE.

# ZION'S Co-operative Mercantile Instit'n,

DOING THE

LARGEST BUSINESS

EVER CARRIED ON IN THE

TERRITORY OF UTAH.

IMPORTERS, DEALERS AND JOBBERS IN

General Merchandise.

FRESH ARRIVALS DAILY,

AND ALL

DESIRABLE NOVELTIES IMPORTED

AS FAST AS THEY APPEAR IN THE

EASTERN MARKETS,

MAKING THE

Stock Carried by this Institu'n

THE LARGEST AND MOST COMPLETE

WEST OF NEW YORK.

WE ASSURE

Courteous Attention, Moderate Prices,

AND A DISPOSITION TO

PLEASE AND ACCOMMODATE

ALL WHO MAY FAVOR US WITH THEIR PATRONAGE.

W. H. HOOVER, Superintendent.



inventory, and the persuasive backing of Church leaders who waged an aggressive public relations campaign from the pulpit.<sup>16</sup>

It was also a result of Brigham Young's tenacious hold on the kingdom. His leadership never faltered and he never let go during a trade crisis. He just loosened his grip, found a new hold, and pressed on. ▣

## Notes

1 Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Dec. 23, 1866.

2 Cited in Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, c1966, 1958), 295.

3 Ibid.

4 Martha Sonntag Bradley, *ZCMI, America's First Department Store* (Salt Lake City: ZCMI, 1991), 10.

5 Ibid., 79.

6 Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, c1976, 1992), 84.

7 Cited in *ibid.*, 85.

8 Cited in Bradley, 12.

9 Ibid., 11.

10 Cited in Arrington, Fox, and May, 87.

11 Cited in Bradley, 14.

12 Arrington, 298.

13 Cited in Bradley, 16.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., 20.

16 Ibid., 26.

In April 1875 the ZCMI board moved to consolidate many of ZCMI's entities under one roof. Reporters as far away as Omaha, Nebraska, followed the erection of ZCMI's new home. The facade of ZCMI's new home frontage spanned fifty-two feet down Salt Lake City's Main Street across from the Old Constitution building with three stories and a full basement.

"The ZCMI new building continues to go up rapidly . . . all of the timbers of which, including the huge supports, are of excellent Utah pine, which for strength and durability can scarcely be excelled.

"Eighty-one clerks, porters and salesmen are employed. . . . The second story has been reached. . . . A steam engine is used to hoist the brick and mortar. The front will be of iron. The walls are of brick. A track will be laid from the depot to the back door so that cars can be unloaded at a trifling expense. Everything considered, this is perhaps the most extensive mercantile establishment west of Chicago, and few houses in that city will surpass it in extent of business and dimensions of store."

—Deseret Weekly News,  
August 3, September 18, 1875.

Visuals: Original 1885 Rockport Co-op Store of Summit County Utah, on permanent display in Pioneer Village at Lagoon (18–19); and Ephraim Co-op (23), photos by Susan Lofgren. ZCMI historical photos (21–22) © Utah State Historical Society.





**THE COOPERATIVE EFFORT** that became Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution was likely patterned after a very successful cooperative community in Brigham City. While Salt Lake was a hot bed of free-wheeling, laissez-faire capitalism, Brigham City grew into an ideal cooperative commonwealth.<sup>1</sup>

Possessed with extraordinary business and organizational ability, Lorenzo Snow was commissioned by Brigham Young in 1854 to lead a remote, struggling community in Box Elder. He arrived with a new specially selected group of skilled craftsmen and tradesmen who were counseled to grow and manufacture all that the community consumed. Many of the group were recent emigrants from Europe who had experience with cooperative movements.

After 10 years of handling the primary tasks of colonization such as the construction of a fort, canal, gristmill and sawmill, Snow opened a cooperative general store. It was his intention to use this mercantile cooperative as the basis for the organization of the entire economic life of the community and the development of the industries needed to make the community self-sufficient.<sup>2</sup> In 1864, Snow organized the Brigham City Cooperative Organization.

The cooperative grew to include the successful industries of farming, a tannery, a woolen factory, development of a sheep herd, cattle and hog enterprises. It included a model dairy operation, textile operations with a hat and cap factory, a silk manufacturing department and a 125-acre cotton farm. Construction enterprises included shingle lathe, picket mill, three sawmills; brick and adobe shops; lime kiln, blacksmith shop; factory for wood turning, planing; and carpentry, masonry, and painting departments.

By 1874 virtually the entire economic life of this community of 400 families was owned and directed by the

cooperative association. Some 40 departments produced the goods and services needed by the community. Almost complete self-sufficiency had been attained; and some textile products, leather, furniture, and dairy products were exported to other northern Utah settlements.<sup>3</sup>

The success of the cooperative during the mid-1870s was written about by a *Deseret News* correspondent, "I did not see a loafer or idle man, boy, woman or girl during my visit; industry, prosperity and contentment seemed to characterize the entire community."<sup>4</sup>

One *Salt Lake Herald* correspondent wrote of Brigham City, "If the example of the inhabitants of this town was more generally followed, Utah would be far more prosperous and her people much better off. We would be far more independent of our sister states and territories; the financial panics of the east or west would not affect us; our people would all have good homes and enjoy more of the comforts of life they can hope for under present regulations; and our children would stand a much better chance of receiving good educations and becoming useful members of society."<sup>5</sup>

Within a few years following the formation of the Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution in 1868, there were over 100 Co-op Mercantile Associations in the Territory. Metal coins, sometimes called "tin money," were often used. They were privately owned and operated stores that took in farm produce, handcrafted items, products of home industries and all manner of goods to be sold or exchanged for needed materials by the public. ▼



## Notes

1 Thomas G. Alexander, *Utah, the Right Place: the Official Centennial History* (Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith, 2003).

2 Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, c1976, 1992), 112.

3 *Ibid.*, 115.

4 *Ibid.*, 123.

5 *Ibid.*

This unique Greek Revival style two-story co-op building (pictured left) was built by the Scandinavian immigrants of Ephraim in 1871. The home of Snow College from 1888 to 1896, the building was restored in 1993.





# THE People's Store

## F. Auerbach & Bros.

by Susan Lofgren

Three brothers—Frederick, Samuel H., and Theodore Auerbach from Prussia—sought their fame and fortune along with so many others in the California “gold rush.” Their first store was a tent at Rabbit Creek, a “mushroom” mining town in California, where merchandise could be brought in only on mule-back. They remained in California until 1863 and then moved to Austin, Nevada, where a mining boom was in progress. In 1864, Frederick set out for Salt Lake City with a load of merchandise and called upon Brigham Young. He inquired about a small adobe cabin on the west side of Main Street, just below First South Street, which was then occupied temporarily by a carpenter shop. President Young visited the carpenter and said, “Brother Stephens, build yourself a shop in the back of the yard. Fred Auerbach is going to open a store in

this cabin.”<sup>1</sup> Fred employed the carpenter to build a counter and some shelving from the wooden packing cases,



which contained his stock of merchandise. In a few days, he secured a crudely made sign above the door, which read, "The People's Store, F. Auerbach & Bros," and opened a Salt Lake store.<sup>2</sup>

Their business prospered from the start. Changing size and location several times, they finally settled after purchasing a sizeable and desirable piece of property on Main Street. With the coming of the railroad, they were able to expand business in Bryan, Wyoming; Promontory, Utah; and Ogden. From Salt Lake headquarters, salesmen traveled throughout Utah and Idaho in buckboards, and by 1883, their business had reached a half-million dollars a year.<sup>3</sup>

Considerable merchandise was purchased at San Francisco, but most of the goods came overland from St. Louis and farther East. Trappers and Indians traded and brought in furs and hides: thousands of beaver, mink, marten, fox, wolf, cougar, lynx, bear, buffalo robes, otter skins, and deer and elk buckskins.<sup>4</sup>

Shortly after their business opened, the bishop of one of the wards came to request a contribution of a few bottles of medicine to help the many that were sick in his ward. Fred, in turn, gave him their entire stock of remedies. Some time later, Brigham Young learned of this contribution and was so pleased he came into the store and thanked them. He said he had given orders that Auerbachs would be permitted to redeem LDS church tithing script at face value—the only non-Mormon firm to whom this unusual privilege was granted.<sup>5</sup>

Eileen Stone describes more of the merchants experiences of the times: "When customers or friends came in from out of town, it was customary to permit them to sleep



**F** Auerbach & Bros.,  
carried all kinds of  
groceries, sacks of flour and  
grains, coffee, tea, sugar, and  
spices. . . . On shelves, in  
cases, and on countertops  
were boots and shoes, . . .  
crockery and glassware, eat-  
ing utensils, pots and pans.

in the aisles or on the counters. Blankets would be taken out of the stock and they would roll themselves in these blankets and sleep. The next morning, after they had arisen, the blankets would be placed back in stock. Most of the people slept in their boots, and some of them did not remove any part of their outer clothing."<sup>6</sup>

"In the 1860s there were no paved streets or sidewalks. The sidewalks at times became so muddy, merchants laid a plank or two along the walk in front of their shop and . . . if one stepped off this planking, they would sink into mud over their shoe tops. . . . Deep ditches were at the sidewalk's edge on either side of Main Street and were filled with water from City Creek. . . .

"Cows, horses and pigs roamed at random along the streets and sidewalks, often damaging fences and gardens. Main Street was a favorite playground for horses, cows, pigs, and dogs, while chickens came from coops located blocks away that they might . . . make merry in the deep dust of Main Street. . . .

"During the summer the dust was very deep. When herds of cattle were driven along Main Street, [merchants] were forced to close windows and doors to prevent merchandise from being ruined by the dust. . . .

"In the days of 1864, store keeping began as early as six-thirty and ended long after midnight. The morning routine included





sweeping out the store and cleaning, filling and trimming the wick of the single hanging lamp. Then merchandise was displayed, on the sidewalk in front of the store. . . .

"E Auerbach & Bros. . . . carried all kinds of groceries, sacks of flour and grains, coffee, tea, sugar, spices . . . common drugs and medicines. In corners and on floor displays, on shelves, in cases, and on countertops were boots and shoes, stoves, farming tools and miners' equipment, crockery and glassware, eating utensils, pots and pans, hardware, coal oil, wallpaper, towels, soaps, ropes and twine, wood, saws, shovels, buckets and brooms, jewelry and notions, tapes, ribbons, buttons, needles and threads, men's ready-wear clothes and furnishings, cloth, ticking for mattresses and pillows, [and] unbleached muslin for sheets. . . .

"In front of the shop, prospectors would tie up their pack mules to hitching posts, and bring in gold dust to exchange for provisions, blankets, clothes, blasting powder, and tools. Miners purchased their supplies, and trappers dropped off stacks of fur pelts and buckskins to exchange.

"The newest and most appealing merchandise was put outside on the street to stop passersby. In 1869, long tin bathtubs, shaped to fit the body, were introduced. There was no plumbing attached to the tub, no running water, and no outlet for used water, but the tub represented such an advance over the washtub placed in front of the kitchen stove that the item created quite a sensation."<sup>7</sup>

#### Gentile Merchants React to Trade War

When the full-fledged boycotting against the gentile firms began in 1865, Gentiles feared not only for their future as merchants but also for their personal security as residents of the Territory.<sup>8</sup> Historian Orson F. Whitney wrote of this period: "Much bitterness of feeling was now manifested between the two classes of the community. Many Gentiles persisted in the belief . . . that the purpose of the Mormons was to compel them to leave the Territory. . . . This, the Mormons indignantly denied. . . . That there were a class of men in the Territory whom the Saints regarded as enemies, and did not care how soon they departed, was admitted. . . . It is true however, that so far as that particular class was concerned, the Saints, or their leaders, had hit upon a plan which they hoped would have the effect of weakening if not dissolving what they deemed an organized opposition to the peace and welfare of the community. It was to boycott such of the Gentile merchants and traders as, it was believed, were conspiring against the best interests of the people."<sup>9</sup>

Seeking resolution to the existing tensions and bitterness, an entire group of merchants proposed to leave and sent the following petition to the leaders of the Church:

"Gentlemen: As you are instructing the people of Utah, through your Bishops and missionaries, not to trade



or do any business with the Gentile merchants, thereby intimidating and coercing the community to purchase only of such merchants as belong to your faith and persuasion, in anticipation of such a crisis being successfully brought about by your teachings, the undersigned Gentile merchants of Great Salt Lake City respectfully desire to make you the following proposition, believing it to be your earnest desire for all to leave the country who do not belong to your faith and creed, namely: On fulfillment of the conditions herein named: First—The payment of our outstanding accounts owing us by members of your church; Secondly—All of our goods, merchandise, chattels, houses, improvements, etc., to be taken at cash valuation, and we make a deduction of twenty-five per cent from the total amount. To the fulfillment of the above we hold ourselves ready at any time to enter into negotiations, and on final arrangements being made and terms of sale complied with, we shall freely leave the Territory.

"Respectfully Yours, Walker Bros.; Gilbert & Sons; Bodenburg & Kahn; Wm. Sloan; C. Prag of the firm of Ransohoff & Co.; Ellis Bros. by J. M. Ellis; J. Meeks; McGrorty & Henry; Siegel Bros.; F. Auerbach & Bros.;





L. Cohn & Co.; Oliver Durant; Klopstock & Co.; S. Lesser & Bros.; Glucksman & Cohn; John H. McGrath; Morse, Walcott & Co.; Wilkinson & Fenn; J. Bauman & Co.; I. Watters; Morris Elgutter; M. B. Callahan; Thomas D. Brown & Sons. *Great Salt Lake City, Dec. 20, 1866*<sup>10</sup>

President Young replied immediately the next day:

"Gentlemen: Your communication of December 20th, addressed to 'The Leaders of the Mormon Church' was received by me last evening. In reply, I have to say that we will not obligate ourselves to collect your outstanding accounts, nor buy your goods, merchandise and other articles that you express your willingness to sell. If you could make such sales as you propose, you would make more money than any merchants have ever done in this country and we, as merchants, would like to find purchasers upon the same basis.

"Your withdrawal from the Territory is not a matter about which we feel any anxiety; so far as we are concerned, you are at liberty to stay or go, as you please. We have used no intimidation or coercion toward the community to have them cease trading with any person or

class, neither do we contemplate using any such means, even could we do so, to accomplish such an end. What we are doing and intending to do, we are willing that you and all the world should know.

"In the first place, we wish you to distinctly understand that we have not sought to ostracize any man or body of men because of their not being of our faith. The wealth that has been accumulated in this Territory from the earliest years of our settlement by men who were not connected with us religiously, and the success which has attended their business operations prove this: In business we have not been exclusive in our dealings, or confined our patronage to those of our own faith. But every man who has dealt fairly and honestly, and confined his attention to his legitimate business, whatever his creed has been, has found friendship in us. To be adverse to Gentiles because they are Gentiles, or Jews because they are Jews, is in direct opposition to the genius of our religion. It matters not what a man's creed is, whether he be Catholic, or Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Quaker or Jew, he will receive kindness and friendship from us, and we have not the least objection to doing business with him; if, in his dealings he act in accordance with the principles of right and deport himself as a good, law abiding citizen should. There is a class, however, who are doing business in the Territory, who for many years have been the avowed enemies of this community. The disruption and overthrow of the community have been the objects which they have pertinaciously sought to accomplish. They have, therefore, used every energy and all the means at their command to put into circulation the foulest slanders about the old citizens. Missionaries of evil, they have no arts too base, no stratagems too vile for them to use to bring about their nefarious ends. While soliciting the patronage of the people and deriving their support from them, they have in the most shameless and abandoned manner used the means thus obtained to destroy the very people whose favor they found it to their interest to court. With the regularity of the seasons have their plots and schemes been formed; and we are warranted by facts in saying that, could the heart's blood of the people here be drawn, and could be coined into the means necessary to bring their machinations to a successful issue, they would not scruple to use it. They have done all in their power to encourage violations of law, to retard the administration of justice, to foster vice and vicious institutions, to oppose the unanimously expressed will of the people, to increase disorder, and change our city from a condition of peace and quietude to lawlessness and anarchy. They have donated liberally to sustain a corrupt and venal press, which has given publicity to the most atrocious libels respecting the old citizens. And have they not had their emissaries in



Washington to misrepresent and vilify the people of this Territory? Have they not kept liquor, and surreptitiously sold it in violation of law and endeavored to bias the minds of the Judiciary to give decisions favorable to their own practices? What claims can such persons have upon the patronage of this community, and what community on earth would be so besotted as to uphold and foster men whose aim is to destroy them? Have we not the right to trade at whatever store we please, or does the Constitution of the United States bind us to enter the stores of our deadliest enemies and purchase of them? If so, we would like that provision pointed out to us. It is to these men whom I have described, and to these alone, that I am opposed, and I am determined to use my influence to have the citizens here stop dealing with them and deal with honorable men. There are honorable men enough in the world with whom we can do business, without being reduced to dealing with the class referred to. I have much more to say upon this subject.

*Brigham Young, Great Salt Lake City, Dec. 21st, 1866*<sup>11</sup>

The effect of the boycott on the gentile merchants was disastrous. The sales of Walker Brothers decreased from \$60,000 a month to \$5,000 and those of Auerbach Brothers, the leading Jewish merchants, similarly.<sup>12</sup> The homes Fannie Brooks rented to Mormon tenants were instantly vacated.

Stone further details the challenges the Auerbach Brothers faced: "[Auerbachs] had many good friends among the Mormons, as well as among the non-Mormons, and had established a reputation for fair dealing and for selling at lower prices than many other merchants.

"It became necessary for [their] Mormon customers to come at night by way of the back entrance in order to make their purchases secretly, for they dared not be seen by the spies of the church. In shipping their goods, [they] disguised the cases and were extremely careful to obliterate the name "Auerbach & Bros.," or any other marking that would enable someone to trace the origin of the cases. If Mormon customers purchased smaller items, some of them used what was called "Mormon Suitcases." Actually, these were sugar sacks or flour sacks, which they carried in their pockets filled with their purchases, and slung over their back before starting for home."<sup>13</sup>

Fred Auerbach personally met with President Young about the unbearable situation and stated that if conditions were to continue, they would be forced to leave Salt Lake. Brigham Young told Fred that Auerbachs had always been good friends of the Mormons and that he did not want them to leave. Following Brigham Young's avowal of friendship, they remained in the valley.

A later incident noted by Stone also demonstrates the friendship between Brigham Young and Auerbach Brothers: "One morning early in 1872, Brigham Young came into the store. Fred and [Samuel] were in the office. President Young said he had come to see [them] on a matter of finance, and asked if [they] could loan him \$20,000 for fourteen days. [The brothers] immediately replied [they] would be glad to do so, and after fourteen days, President Young repaid the loan. [Brigham] offered to pay interest, but [they] refused to accept any interest. [They] did think it rather strange that President Young should borrow money from [them], because he was reputed to be very wealthy and to have at all times great sums of cash on hand."<sup>14</sup>

Many of the smaller gentile firms moved to the newly established city of Corinne or left the Territory permanently. By 1869, those who remained were ultimately able to regain a fair share of their former volume due to the increase of the gentile population through the development of the mines and the railroads. Of the Jewish merchants, the Auerbachs, the Kahns, the Siegels, the Cohns, and the Watters brothers survived the boycott.

Eventually conditions changed and the prohibition of Mormons trading with Gentiles ultimately relaxed and both the wealth and influence of the Auerbachs in the mercantile affairs of the valley resumed.<sup>15</sup>

The Auerbach Company became one of the oldest and most successful department stores in the country under the ownership and management of one family. After 114 years in the retail industry, the downtown store at State Street and Broadway closed its doors on February 3, 1979.<sup>16</sup> ▼

## Notes

1 Cited in Eileen Hallet Stone, *A Homeland in the West: Utah Jews Remember* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2001), 77.

2 Leon L. Watters, *The Pioneer Jews of Utah* (New York: American Jewish Historical Society, 1952), 131.

3 Ibid., 132.

4 Stone, 79.

5 Ibid., 80.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 78–83.

8 Watters, 47.

9 Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah* (Salt Lake City: G. Q. Cannon, 1892–1904), 2:143–44; also cited in Watters, 48.

10 Ibid., 2:164–65; cited in Watters, 48–49.

11 Ibid., 2:165–67; cited in Watters, 50–52.

12 Watters, 58.

13 Stone, 84.

14 Ibid., 87–88.

15 *Deseret News*, July 20, 1935.

16 *Salt Lake Tribune*, Jan. 7, 1979.

Visuals: Original 1885 Rockport Co-op Store merchandise (25), photos by Susan Lofgren. Pioneer mercantile, art © by Glen Edwards (26–27). Historical photos (29) © Utah State Historical Society.







# Pioneer Spotlight

By J. Cecil Alter

## Herbert Samuel Auerbach

was born October 4, 1882, in Salt Lake City, to Samuel H. and Eveline Brooks Auerbach, his father being a member of the pioneer merchandising firm of F. Auerbach & Bros. He was educated in Germany and became an accomplished violinist who gave concerts in Europe. His graduate training at Columbia University School of Mines earned him a master's degree in electrometallurgy in 1906.

For several years he was a consulting engineer of mining properties in Colorado and Idaho, but [returned to] merchandising and real estate management in Salt Lake City. From 1911 he devoted all his time to the family holdings, becoming president of Auerbach Company department store, Auerbach Realty Company, and Brooks Company.

Herbert's most ambitious enterprise, after the store was moved from Main Street to State Street, was de-

signing and building the Centre Theatre, the largest and one of the best-equipped motion picture houses in the city.

His [deep] interest in western history [evolved into] The Herbert S. Auerbach Collection of books, manuscripts, maps, documents, and pictures of the Old West, gathered through the years, [becoming] a veritable treasure-trove.

[A writer also,] his best literary work was on early western travels . . . of the Spanish Padres who preceded the Utah Pioneers into the Great Basin. "Old Trails, Old Forts. Old Trappers and Traders," "Father Escalante's Route," and "Father Escalante's Itinerary," were published in the *Utah Historical Quarterly* in 1941. His most excellent work, "Father Escalante's Journal 1776-77," appeared in 1943, translated from the original Spanish. In 1940 he published W. A. Ferris's *Life in the Rocky Mountains*.

Mr. Auerbach spoke French and

German and became a competent translator of early Spanish documents. His poetry was . . . published in the West . . . and [he had over one hundred] ballads and religious songs . . . published. Some of these were written in collaboration with Anthony C. Lund, Latter-day Saint Tabernacle Choir leader.

[His prestige and prominence proved invaluable to the newly organized Sons of Utah Pioneers when he served as their president in 1938.]

One of his most valuable historical collections was the furniture, family utensils, and other relics of the Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith, laboriously picked up piece by piece and year by year in out-of-the-way places in Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, and New York, where the Prophet had lived. After being exhibited for some time in the Auerbach Store, this collection was presented to the General Authorities of the Latter-day Saints Church [during his term as SUP president].

[At] the beginning of World War I, [he served] as major in the Ordnance Department until 1919 and retained membership in the Army Ordnance Association until 1941.

Though Mr. Auerbach was one of Utah's busiest and most successful men, he [accepted an] appointment on the Board of Control, Utah State Historical Society in 1936, and was elected president, being reappointed and reelected in 1940 and 1944. [He was also] made a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers [by invitation].

He died on March 19, 1945, after a brief illness. ▣





# Madsen Furniture Company

## *A Lasting Legacy*

**P**. W. Madsen (Peter Wilhelm) was born in Fredericia, Denmark, in 1852 to Hans Peter Madsen and Louisa Katrina Christna Tetzner. Hans came from a long line of furniture builders from the village of Orsbjerg, near Odense. Hans's father and grandfather were well-known craftsmen who specialized in wooden cabinets and fine furniture.

[After joining] the Church, the family sold everything they had in order to secure passage to the United States and Utah. Immediately upon their arrival, the Madsens began to carry out the plans they had made for their new home in Zion. Following a prayer of faith, Hans and Peter Madsen selected a small frame house nearby, located 50 feet west of Main Street midway between South Temple and First South. They purchased the property and had a modest frame store built in the same open space between their house and the boardwalk. Before the end of the year, Peter married a Danish convert, Elise Larsen, and they moved into the loft above the shop. Later, P. W. Madsen's sons, Richard and Emil, would often boast that they were "born in a furniture store on Main Street."

After the store was built, there was little money left for merchandise. The family pooled all of their remaining personal possessions and offered them for sale. With the proceeds, the "State's Furniture Company" opened its doors with an inventory of self-manufactured tables, chairs, chests and beds augmented with a few goods shipped in from the East. Each sale gave the family business new capital to make more furniture. They plowed every penny earned right back into the business and, as a result, had to live as providently as possible.

Louisa was the real genius of their early success. She and Peter worked in sales, while Hans and Peter's brother August handled the manufacturing end. Everyone worked 15-hour days in order to make their family venture a success.

Within five years, their hard work and diligence began to pay off. Under Louisa's tutelage, Peter developed the skills of a first-class merchant. Hans Madsen returned to Denmark in 1880 as a full-time missionary.

After the tragic loss of his wife and newborn baby daughter, August left Utah and pursued training as a seaman. This left Peter and his mother as the owners and operators of the State's Furniture Company. In 1884 the Madsens opened the P. W. Madsen Furniture Company at 51 East First South. As the furniture store prospered, P.W. ventured into other businesses, including construction, mining, banking and other investments, including the



Western Loan & Building Company, and the Utah Commercial & Savings Bank. Eventually sons of Peter became involved in such businesses as the Utah Stove and Hardware Company, Century Mining Company, and the Salt Lake Livery and Transfer Company.

P.W. learned first-hand to survive and succeed in the early days of the territory. Pictured right, P.W.'s *Instructions to Employees* characterizes his philosophy.

P.W.'s son Richard opened Standard Furniture Company in 1907 just north of ZCMI at 9 South Main. By 1914, Standard Furniture had become Utah's largest home furnishing outlet. Standard Furniture at one time was the most successful furniture store in America in terms of volume of sales per square foot. P.W.'s grandson Richard W. Madsen Jr., opened the Sterling Furniture Company in 1926 and another grandson, Francis Armstrong Madsen, opened a Sterling Furniture store in Ogden in 1928. Sterling Furniture is still in business, located at the Sugar House section of Salt Lake City.

The original P.W. Madsen Furniture Company on First South was acquired by Francis Armstrong Madsen in 1947 and operated there from 1967 to 1968. Following the construction of the new ZCMI mall, Madsen Furniture Company negotiated a trade of property at 4650 S. Highland Drive for their old downtown property. At the new location, they shifted their business to nothing but the finest furniture available.

Salt Lake City became known as one of the best markets in the country for furniture sales, resulting in a proliferation of furniture stores—double the number of furniture stores to any community of similar size. Following this tremendous increase in competition, Madsen Furniture closed their doors in 2001, after 125 years of service to the community. ■

*Sources: Excerpts taken from W. Dee Halverson, A Lasting Legacy: The Madsen Family History, reprinted by permission of the author. Additional historical information provided by Francis A. Madsen Jr. Artwork and historical document provided by author.*



## Instructions to Employees

### Our Business Code

Store open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. except on Saturday; then store open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 9:00 p.m. This is in effect the year round. This store will remain closed each Sabbath.

### Duties of Employees

Swep floors, dust furniture, office shelves and show cases. Remember, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." Trim wicks, clean chimneys and fill lamps. Make your pens carefully (but you may whittle the quills to suit your individual taste). Open the windows for fresh air. Each clerk should bring in one bucket of water and one bucket of coal. These things are necessary to prepare us for the day's business. Any employee who smokes Spanish cigars, uses liquor in any form, gets shaved at the barber shop, or frequents pool halls or public dance halls will give his employer every reason to suspicion his integrity, worthy intentions and his all around honesty.

Each employee is expected to pay his tithing, that is 10% of his annual income to the Church. No matter what ones income might be, you should not contribute less than \$25. per year to the Church. Each employee will attend Sacrament Meeting and adequate time will be given to each employee to attend Fast Meeting. Also you are expected to attend your Sunday School. Men employees will be given one evening off each week for courting purposes. Two evenings each week if they go regularly to Church and attend to Church duties. After any employee has spent his 13 hours of labor in the store, he should then spend his leisure time in the reading of good books, and the contemplating of the Glories and building up of the Kingdom of God.

I W. Madsen

## SUP New Members

### At Large

George H. Stevens  
Bliss W. Tew

### Bountiful

Terry S. Allen  
Albert V. Anderson  
Ernest Cima  
Darrell R. Oborn

### Brigham Young

Otto L. Draper  
John H. Grant  
Russell L. Gray  
James M. Harris  
George T. Taylor  
Henry L. Whiffen  
Steve White

### Canyon Rim

Elman K. Ellsworth  
Mitch Wiley

### Cedar City

Harl Adams  
Wm. Joe Melling  
Jesse Ray Robb

### Cotton Mission

Roland L. Lee  
John R. Matthews

### Grove City

Rulon Hillam  
Phillip Ray Jackson

### Harmony

Gus Cales  
Michael Cavey

### Holladay

David L. Beardshall  
Harley M. Busby  
Gerald Dean  
David Owen Parkinson  
John L. Siddoway

### Hurricane Valley

Ronald Simkins

### Lehi

Robert F. Bohn

### Little Salt Lake

Daniel Evans  
Luck Felstead  
David O. Orton  
Tom Zaleski

### Mesa

David E. Seiter  
Robert Seiter

### Mills

Jack D. Burgess

### Morgan

John Kartchner  
Ralph B. Lewis  
M. Reed Wilde

### Mountain Valley

Terry A. Pitts

### Murray

J. Weston Daw  
Don MacAngus

### Ogden Pioneer

Wayne Lamont Pack

### Pioneer Heritage

Burton Miller  
David L. Nelson

### Salt Lake Pioneer

Richard Benton  
John Butler  
Randy Cutliff  
Eddie Gift  
Donald L. Harwell  
Orin Howell  
Dennis Ray Pegues

### Settlement Canyon

Alan K. Jeppesen  
Ralph D. Jordan

### Sevier Valley

John Busk  
Travis Hunsaker  
Gary W. Kyhl  
Hal Peterson  
Terrill Staples  
Steven Taylor  
Scott Turner  
Billy White

### Squaw Peak

Kay Boley  
Sherman Cloward  
Lyle J. Cooper  
Grahm Norris  
Wallace Norton  
Fred H. C. Openshaw  
William Sederberg  
Peter Van Orman

### Upper Snake River Valley

Ronald H. Gibb

### Taylorville-Bennion

Duane Labrum  
Keith Player  
Kent Tanner  
Boyce Williams

### Temple Fork

Clair Theurer

### New Life Member

Armand D. Johansen,  
Olympus Hills  
Ray B. Andrus,  
Murray



# Guest Editorial

By Mary A. Johnson  
President International Society  
Daughters of Utah Pioneers

In the Pioneer Memorial Museum one can see a representation of the early ZCMI store with the mandated inscription "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" and an "all-seeing eye" hovering over its portals. The baskets of simulated eggs, fruit, and vegetables seen through the window are reminders of the bartering that took place in those early cooperative businesses. Bartering was the merchandizing medium for many years.

By 1869 the ladies in Salt Lake caught the vision of cooperative industry and the Relief Society of the 15th Ward erected a building to use as a store as well as a meeting place.

Brigham Young supported their venture since he believed that women would make just as good traders or merchants as men. He remarked on one occasion: "Another thing I will say with regard to our trading. Our Relief Societies are doing immense good now, but they can take hold and do all the trading for these wards just as well as to keep a big loafer to do it. It is always disgusting to me to see a big fat fellow handing out calicos and measuring ribbons; I would rather see the ladies do it. The ladies can learn to keep books as well as the men; we have some few, already, who are just as good accountants as any of our brethren. Why not teach more of them to keep books and sell goods

and let them do this business, and let the men go to raising sheep, wheat, or cattle, or go and do something or other to beautify the earth and help to make it like the Garden of Eden, instead of spending their time in a lazy, loafing manner?"<sup>1</sup>

A Women's Co-operative store was established in Salt Lake City and in many of the outlying communities such as Manti, Ogden, Provo, Parowan, and St. George. Women contributed their skills including spinning yarn, knitting stockings, making soap, and gleaning wheat. Cheese making became an industry and groups worked together in these co-operative endeavors.

There were women who set up their own household supply stores in a room or part of a room in their small homes. Some women provided financially for their families with their merchandising businesses while husbands were on missions.

In Tooele, in 1890 George Atkin's health began to fail and he died January 3, 1899. His wife, Emma J., had learned the art of dressmaking early in her life and was able to start a dressmaking business to provide for her family. She taught young girls in sewing classes to be proficient in the work. After operating her business for four years, Emma began to make hats for sale. After six years, she moved to a larger

building on First East for her expanding business. She added a line of ready-to-wear clothing and discontinued her dressmaking. As her business grew, she built a frame building to the west of her old store and later moved to the downtown business district.<sup>2</sup>

Another pioneer business woman was Hilda Anderson Erickson. She and her husband, John, decided to build a store in Grantsville to supply the needs of local residents and miners from surrounding areas. Hilda was the store manager, buyer, and clerk. She also housed and fed visitors traveling through. Later she added a gas station and lumberyard to her general merchandising store. When Hilda died at age 108 on January 20, 1968, she was honored as the last pioneer to cross the plains before the railroad arrived. She attributed her long life and good health to exercise, hard work, proper food, rest, and right living.<sup>3</sup>

Brigham Young was right, women did make just as good traders or merchants as men and left their mark in the mercantile industry in Utah. ■

## Notes

1 DUP Historical Pamphlet, March 1941, 270-71.

2 DUP Lesson, May 2005 (compiled by Anne Eckman), 412, 414.

3 DUP Lesson, May 2003 (compiled by Anne Eckman), 400.

## Chapter Eternal

In loving memory of our SUP brothers who have recently joined their pioneer forebears on the other side of the veil. Pioneer rejoices in the lives of these good men and extends its sympathies and good wishes to families and loved ones.

Ray Baker, Beaver Chapter

I. Haven Barlow, Buena Ventura

Clifford Beck, At Large

Norman Leslie Daniels, Pioneer Heritage

Richard Clyde Forsyth, Taylorsville-Bennion

Lee Milne Hamblin, Murray

Dell Klingler, USRV

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Adrian Richins, Mesa

Ray Rushton Rockwood, Grove City

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